

cusssing that point will also apply here. As to the convulsions that sometimes occur, their explanation is possible, when large tracts are deprived of their blood-supply as in the case of the occlusion of the basilar, by the diffuse anæmia of the pons and medulla. In case of embolisms of smaller arteries, he can only account for them by calling into consideration the results of the well-known experimental researches on the cortical substance in which convulsions were excited by electrical or mechanical irritation, the sudden anæmia caused by the embolism, in this case acting as the excitant.

The section on tumors of the brain by Dr. Oberneier appears to be a useful and quite complete and well-arranged memoir upon its special subject, but for various reasons chiefly on account of the relatively slight frequency of these affections and the necessary limits of this notice, we cannot here give it detailed attention. The section next following that of Dr. Heubner on syphilitic disease of the brain, cord and nerves we shall pass, as we have already noticed in the pages of the JOURNAL (April, 1875,) a more extensive work on part of the same subjects, and the article though important is very concise and presents no important points for criticism. We can cordially recommend it to our readers as a brief but thorough handling of this very important subject by a thoroughly competent authority.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

IV.—BARTHOLOW : THERAPEUTICS.

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON MATERIA MEDICA AND THERAPEUTICS. By Roberts Bartholow, M. A., M. D. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1876; 537 pages. Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co.

In the multiplication of works on all the practical and general departments of medicine at the present day, each new comer is liable to be closely questioned as to its *raison d'être* and must furnish valid reasons for its appearance. And though it is far from being true in all cases that success depends upon merit, yet any work that is more than a mere epitome or labor-saving condensation, must to meet the favor of the book-buying and reading public present some well-grounded claims for consideration. This is especially the case with a work like the one whose title heads this notice, and which appears so soon after another work of unusual merit, that of Dr. H. C. Wood, occupying the same department of medicine.

Dr. Bartholow recognizes this fact in his preface, in which he states that this book embodies in effect the ideas as to what such a work should be, derived from many years experience as a teacher of materia medica and therapeutics, and alludes to certain features in which it differs from its predecessors and which therefore entitle it in some measure at least, to the consideration of the medical profession. We can only give attention to these general features of the work, its details are too numerous to be even approximately, much less adequately reviewed, in a notice like the present one.

In the first place this work differs from nearly all others in its method of treatment of its subject. Like the very valuable and scientific treatise of H. C. Wood, it gives scarcely any attention to the pharmaceutical details that formed no small part of the text in most of the former works on therapeutics, and which have been the bug-bear of many a medical student. In a work on therapeutics of the compass of an ordinary text book such details really have no proper place, there is enough valuable matter that can better fill the space they occupy, and when it is needed to refer to them there are special works that can amply meet all requirements. The omission of these needless details, and their substitution by fuller and more elaborate accounts of the physiological action of the various medicinal agents, places this work and that of Dr. Wood on a much higher plane than their predecessors, relieving them very decidedly from the old stigma of "cook-book pharmacy," and we have nothing but approval for the change.

A feature in which this work differs from most of its predecessors is in the classification adopted. As Dr. Bartholow says, in the present state of our knowledge a perfect classification is impossible. The only question, therefore, is, not whether the one here adopted is free from faults or inconsistencies, but whether these are sufficiently prominent and glaring to vitiate the system. A plan of classification may be so simple and general as in a measure, to place it apparently without the pale of criticism, the difficulties appear in the elaboration and detailed application of such a plan, and the more detailed a system is, the more obvious are its defects at first sight. Dr. Bartholow's method has certainly the merit of simplicity, he divides remedies into five classes: viz., those used to promote constructive metamorphosis; those used to promote destructive metamorphosis; those used to modify the functions of the nervous system; those used to cause some evacuation from the body; and lastly, topical remedies. The only general criticism that this arrangement suggests, is partly anticipated by the author,—it is that, inasmuch as the nutrition and all the processes of the body are under the control of the nervous system, at least in a certain sense, the third class here given would be, by a closer analysis, largely resolved into the others already named, or that as it stands at present it comprehends to a greater or less degree al

the others. Therefore, to say as does our author, that a large class of agents is used not to affect tissue change but to modify nervous action, is hardly an exact statement of the case, though the qualificatory remark that they probably do influence structure in some unknown way, relieves it of its baldness to a considerable extent. When we come to see the application of this plan, its value or want of value becomes of course more apparent. We notice here some matters of detail that are perhaps open to animadversion under this arrangement, such for example as placing quinine under the agents favoring constructive metamorphosis and salicine and salicylic acid under topical remedies, but our space will not permit us to more than merely mention them. Taken altogether, however, the classification adopted is about as good as any that could be looked for in a work of this class, and better, as not attempting so much, than the one adopted in the work of Dr. H. C. Wood. It is very evident, however, that this classification, which, by the way, is not so very different from that adopted in a recent German work, is far from being altogether satisfactory, even in its own very general and unelaborate way. Its author's claims for it are modest enough, he says that he does not hold that it is superior to others—only that its simplicity is in its favor.

A noteworthy feature of the book is the attention given to some subjects that do not usually receive any very extended notice in works on therapeutics, for example, the section on aliments is the longest in the volume, and we find mention of several remedies that are not officinal or often included in works of this class. Then we have here also classified notices of most of the more important mineral springs in this country, a good practical section on hydrotherapy, and another on electricity. In fact, the practical character of the book is prominent throughout, while at the same time it embodies all or most of the recent scientific advances in this department. While it is less prominently a critical treatise on scientific therapeutics than is the work of Dr. H. C. Wood, it is if anything more practical, and perhaps better fitted for the use of the student commencing this study. A bibliographical list appended to the remarks on each drug or remedial agent, is a useful feature, though with references in the text to the same authorities, it would, we think, be still more valuable.

We can cordially recommend this volume as a text-book, not as supplanting, but as introductory to others more critical and elaborate.
